



Department of Justice

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CIRCUS AGENT SENTENCED FOR ALIEN SMUGGLING AND VISA FRAUD

WASHINGTON – A former acrobatic performer who resides in Orlando, Fla., was sentenced to 15 months in prison on charges of inducing aliens to enter the United States illegally and making false statements in visa applications, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher and Acting U.S. Attorney James R. Klindt for the Middle District of Florida announced today.

Kristo Ivanov, 60, was sentenced this morning before U.S. District Court Judge Patricia C. Fawsett of the Middle District of Florida (Orlando). Ivanov previously admitted in a plea agreement that from 2001 through February 2006, he personally helped as many as 870 aliens enter or remain in the United States through fraudulent means. Ivanov prepared visa applications for aliens that falsely stated that they were circus performers coming to work in Florida circuses. In fact, none of the aliens had been hired by any of the circuses listed in the visa applications. Rather, the visa applications were simply a means for the aliens to enter or remain in the United States. Ivanov charged each alien from \$500 to \$2,500 to prepare the applications.

Ivanov, a Bulgarian native who is now a naturalized American citizen, came to the United States in 1980 as an acrobat for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. He has owned and operated a circus booking agency, Magic Star Entertainment, of Lake Mary, Fla., for more than five years and used that agency to fraudulently sponsor aliens to enter or remain in the United States.

As part of his plea agreement, Ivanov cooperated with the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services' (CIS) fraud unit to identify all of the fraudulent applications submitted through his scheme. Ivanov also agreed to forfeit to the United States approximately \$800,000 he earned in smuggling fees.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, ICE, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at the Department of Homeland Security. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Cynthia Hawkins of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida and Trial Attorney Arlene Reidy of the Domestic Security Section of the Criminal Division.

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